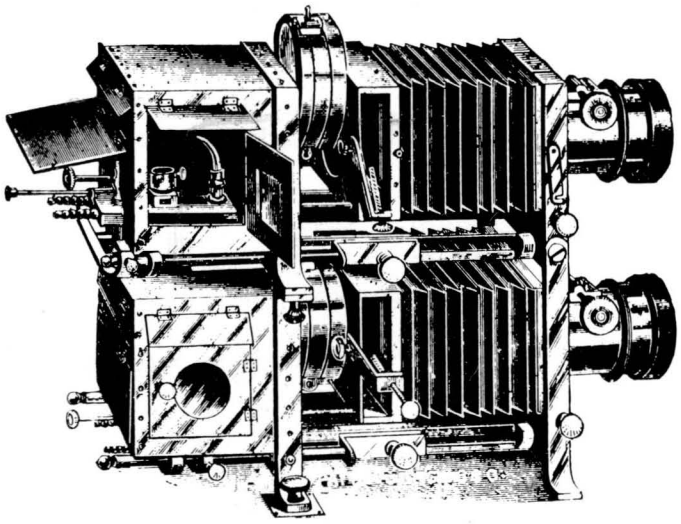
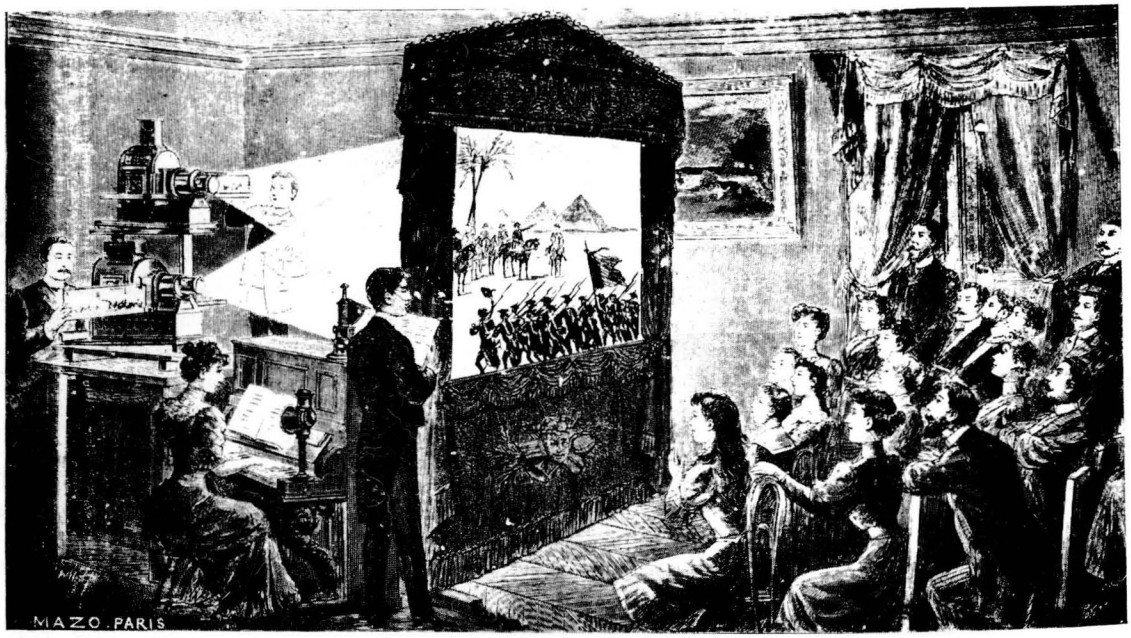


THE IMPROVED "BOSTON IDEAL."

# THE MAGIC LANTERN BULLETIN

Vol. VII, No. 1
July, 1985




Summer again! And time to reflect on the past half-year as we sip lemonade in the shade, brown ourselves on beaches and at lakeside, and let the cares of the last six months slip away. We've cleared some serious hurdles lately, and I know that there were those who doubted we would ever see this, the beginning of Volume VII, the 23rd issue of the Bulletin (remember those two double-issues!). Members will receive four issues of the Magic Lantern Bulletin during 1985; future issues will appear August, October, and December. Coming up next month is the first installment of the most ambitious project this Society has undertaken: a facsimile reproduction of the complete run of Wilson's 19th century journal, The Magic Lantern. It will take several years to complete this undertaking, but paid-up members will receive a gem of inestimable worth: over 150 copies of America's finest professional lantern journal.

Please notice the emphasis placed on the words "paid-up" in the last paragraph.

The Magic Lantern Bulletin is published quarterly by the Magic Lantern Society of the U.S. and Canada. Annual dues are $15.

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An appeal for 1985 dues in the last Bulletin has met with mixed results. We've received many renewals and even some new members, but not nearly so many as we'd like. This issue will be sent to all 1984 members of the Society, but we cannot continue to send our journal to those who haven't renewed. If you want to receive next month's landmark edition but haven't yet secured your membership, please send $15 to Terry Borton, Secretary/Treasurer, pronto!

As no one has stepped forward with an offer to edit the Bulletin outright (though I have had several kind people volunteer assistance), I will continue to edit our journal until further notice. Please help make my job easier and your Bulletin better by contributing material. If you've never written an article for us, why not take the plunge this year? It's been said before, but it bears saying again: We're a small Society separated by vast distances and the best way for us to get to know one another is through our journal. It's easy to send up a smokescreen, to say, "I'm no expert," and pass the buck to someone else. The truth of the matter is---NONE OF US ARE EXPERTS! Or if we do possess some expertise, it's in a very small corner of this huge field. Share your small piece with the rest of us and together we can complete this puzzle.

One of the articles in this issue grew out of a trip I made to Seattle some months back. I'd been looking forward to visiting our Northwestern members, particularly Joe and Alice Koch and Bob and Carm Bishop, but wouldn't you know it, both families were out of town! It wasn't until I returned home that I learned that Joe and Alice had been travelling abroad; their account of that journey to New Zealand and Australia leads off this edition. (By the way, I did have a lovely time in Seattle with Ruth Hayes ((see MLB, Vol. VI, Nos 3&4, pp. 17-20)). Ruth has a new flipbook out entitled "Five Pelicans Fish" which will be reviewed in the October Bulletin).

In addition, this month's Bulletin features book reviews by Dick Balzer and the winner of last issue's "Lantern Readings" contest. Before closing, I'd like to correct two oversights. In the April, 1985 Bulletin, Ruth Hayes' zoetrope strip (Fig.5 on page 18) was inadvertently printed upside down and Bob Woodward's name was omitted as the author of the "Magic Lantern Bibliography: V" on page 31. Sorry, Ruth; sorry, Bob.

And in closing, let me note that I moved several weeks ago (see new address above). Please submit all articles to that address.

THE UNIVERSAL LANTERN:
A TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIA
By Joe Koch

On our recent trip to New Zealand, Alice and I spent two days with Bill Main and his wife Jill in their interesting home. It hangs on the side of a hill overlooking the water in Johnsonville, a suburb of Wellington. Bill has one whole room devoted to the main part of his collection with other pieces scattered here and there. Being a collector, of course, there are many other antique items not related to the lantern or even photographica in Bill's collection. Some of the most interesting non-lantern-related objects were:

1) Wooden horn "Cylinder" phonographs;
2) Wooden horn "Disc" phonographs; and
3) A "mechanical canary" which sings merrily when a person deposits a large British penny (of which Bill has a ready supply!).

Major pieces in Bill's lantern collection include:

1) A "Crank Generator" magic lantern which was originally a four-person operation--one to crank, one to hold it down, one to handle the slides, and one to narrate;
2) Many posters and broadsides;
3) A large technical library;
4) Many beautiful wood-mounted slides in complete sets of which the most fantastic is a panorama set entitled "The Treasure of Ramsinitus." Anyone having a reading for this should contact Bill; and
5) A mechanical slide of London Bridge in which the bridge rises one side at a time, a sailing ship passes through followed by a steam vessel, and the bridge closes. A fabulous slide!

Our second night there, Bill cooked a delicious dinner and followed it up with a piece de resistance, a lantern show for Alice, myself, and our travelling partners, Al and Ruth Leslie.

Bill uses a T.J. Middleton horizontal biunial lantern (1875). It has been adapted for electricity; Bill's rear-projection show needs only 75 watt bulbs. The screen is a linen sheet which he has painted to look like an old-time Parisian stage setting (with orchestra in front and balconies on the side). The space in the middle for the image measures 34"x34"; the total screen dimensions are 70"x70". The lantern is set up 5 to 6 feet behind the screen. Ordinarily, one of Bill's kids narrates while Bill operates the equipment, but since no one was available, Bill did both. The entire show is presented with appropriate period background music taped from Bill's extensive record collection.

The show slides were all wood-mounted; their sheer volume made presenting a show difficult! Intermission was declared halfway through the show, allowing us to snack on cheese, wine, and Jill's cake, while Bill prepared the next stack of slides. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

The show begins, the lights dim, and the music starts:

1) "QUEEN VICTORIA"--Clara Butt singing "God Save the King."
2) "NELSON"--Evan Williams singing "The Death of Nelson."
3) "THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH"--The B.B.C. theater group singing the background.
4) "ROCK OF AGES"--A church choir providing the background.

5) "COMING THROUGH THE RYE"--Mary Garden singing.
6) "THE LOST CHORD"--Oscar Matzke singing.
7) "ONLY A PANSY BLOSSOM"--William Oakland singing.
8) "RED RIDING HOOD, THE MAIDEN GOOD," a 24 slide set by W.C. Hughes. This set is full of symbolism, with wood sprites, elves and other figures peering from behind mushrooms and tree stumps and lurking in the background. The artwork and color are beautiful.
9) "THE TREASURE OF RAMSINITUS," another beautiful colored set composed of static and panoramic views.
10) The show ended with mechanical slip slides and "THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA" (with sound effects!).

The following day we said our farewells and began five leisurely days of driving to Aukland. A visit to the Museum in Aukland netted us a new friend, Gordon Maitland, Curator of Photography. When I inquired if they had any lantern slides, Gordon replied, "We've been looking for you for ten years!" It seems that many of the old Antarctic explorers headquartered in New Zealand, grew fond of it, and retired there, bringing with them treasure troves of lantern slides, photographs, and stereo scenes. The Museum ended up with many of these; their collection numbers several thousand lantern slides alone. The sad part of the story is that they have only one badly beat-up old lantern lacking even an illuminant. The only way to see the slides is using a light box. I've sent Gordon material on the storage and repair of slides; perhaps someone cut there could provide a magic lantern. Write The Library, c/o Gordon Maitland, Aukland Institute and Museum, "Private Bag," Aukland, New Zealand.

(Joe's fascinating account of his "Lantern Journies" will continue and conclude in the October Bulletin.)

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TO THE MEMBERSHIP
By Joe Koch

I have been designated to investigate the possibility of a new membership card for society members. We have had the old one for seven years and still have a considerable stock on hand. The original cost of the cards was $25 for 1,000.

Some thoughts:
1) Do we want more than two colors?
2) How much do we want to spend?
3) Should we issue a new card every year?
4)Do we want a plastic or pin-on type?
5) What kind of design and how much information?
6) Should we stick with what we have?

I would like to report to the Chairman by December, 1985, so send your ideas on this matter to me at 819 14th St., NE, Auburn, WA 98002.

NEW MEMBERS
Museum of History & Industry
2700 24th Avenue East
McCurdy Park
Seattle, WA 98112

CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Harry M. Kresch (215) 886-2296
Apt. A1225, Cedarbrook Hill Apts.
Wyncote, PA 19095

BUY/SELL/TRADE
200 Oregon lantern slides to TRADE for 200 Washington state slides, any subject. Contact Joe Koch.

LANTERN READINGS
A WINNER! : ROBERT H. WOODWARD

Readers of the last edition of the Bulletin will remember the contest in which members were asked to submit an original reading for a series of slides entitled "Story of a Coast Guardsman," issued by Williams, Brown & Earle of Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

Our sincere thanks to all those who tried their hand at the task and congrats to Bob Woodward of San Jose, California, who submitted the winning entry. Bob will receive a copy of Erik Barnouw's The Magician and the Cinema (Oxford University Press, 1981), a bountifully illustrated volume on the role played by magicians in the evolution of the cinema.

1. The waves washed hard against the cliffs
   That edged the stormy sea.
   A passing ship steered well away
   And sailed by warily.

2. At water's edge a studious group
   Inspected rock and sand,
   Secure and safe from ocean's blast
   Upon a lip of sand.

3. "But what," thought John, "is this I see
   A hundred yards away?
   "I'll venture down there by myself
   If others want to stay."

4. It was a strange and unknown plant
That fascinated him,
With no regard for raging sea
Or ocean's powerful whim.

5. As breakers foamed around his feet
He clutched the slippery rock,
Lamenting now that he had strayed
From others in his walk.

6. His fellows saw his fearsome plight
And vowed to save his life,
Urged on by John's despairing cries,
The pleas of John's young wife.

7. They summoned Guy, the Coast Guardsman,
Who happened to be near.
He saw the man, he saw the wife,
He saw his duty clear.

They tied a rope about the waist
of brave and faithful Guy,
And lowered him with careful grasp
From another crag on high.

8. The salty spray stung Guy's bare face,
   The surf tore at his feet,
   As he descended on the rope
   To victory sure and sweet.

9. At last he reached the desperate John,
   Whose hands were numb with cold,
   Whose life was hanging by a thread
   Of rope he could not hold.

10. Guy grasped John's limp and weary frame
    With one hand round the waist,
    While others pulled the pair of them
    To safety in all haste.

10. John lay upon the rocky ground,
    Saved from a watery death,
    Receiving succor from his friends
    While he regained his breath.

    Nearby his tearful, thankful wife,
    Relieved he did not die,
    Held tight the Guardsman's rope-burned hand
    And said, "You're quite a Guy!"

BOOK REVIEWS
By Dick Balzer

Lanterna Magica: Optic Toy, by Ernst Hrabalek
Ernst Hrabalek, a Viennese member of our society, who possesses possibly the world's most extensive collection of toy magic lanterns, has just published a book about his fabulous collection.

Although the book is in German, making reading the text difficult for many of our members, it is nevertheless an incredibly valuable and attractive addition to the library of any lantern enthusiast.

This 176 page book is chock full of information and features 14 colored and over 200 black and white photographs. Collectors who have struggled to determine a lantern's manufacturer based on the initials stamped on the back will appreciate Ernst's systematic presentation of representative lanterns by major and minor manufacturers including Ernst Plank (EP), Gebruden Bing (GBN), George Carette (GC Co. N), Max Dannhorn (MD), Carl Muller, Jean Schoenner (JS), and Jean Falk (JF). The list goes on and on.

While the above alone makes the book worth owning, the lanterns in Hrabalek's collection, beautifully photographed and presented, make this something special. The more unusual lanterns pictured include a red racing car lantern (which I have never before seen), the Chinaman, the Eiffel Tower, a Chinese Pagoda, and a side-by-side toy biunial. There are at least a dozen lanterns illustrated that I have seen nowhere else. The display of this impressive collection is almost overwhelming.

The Road to the Isles--The Hebrides in Lantern Slides, edited by L.M.H. Smith
This book, published two years ago by the Secretary of the British Magic Lantern Society, details life a century ago on the islands off the west coast of Scotland.

Mike Smith uncovered a group of lantern slides by the famous photographer George Washington Wilson (look at some of your English slides and you might well find the GWW initials). These slides were accompanied by the original lecturer's readings.

This 131 page book is composed of 62 beautifully reproduced slides and the accompanying text. The book begins with a slide of peaceful waters overlooked by a clouded sun, its light filtering over the islands in the background. This image is followed by other scenic shots and it is not until page nine that we are introduced to the crofter's (the island's primary inhabitants) dwelling with the following description:

> (T)he darkness of the...apartment is inpenetrable, excepting directly opposite the entrance, while outside there is usually a pool of stagnant odoriferous liquid, in which one or two dirty ducks puddle.

This book illustrates the way in which lantern slides were used to document the lives of people seldom seen by the general 19th century population.

Mike Smith's book costs $17.00 (plus $4.00 shipping) and Ernst Hrabalek's book costs $25.00 (plus $5.00 shipping). Write directly to them or send checks payable to them to me and we'll see if we can get a group purchase together.